

REMARKS

Claims 14-18, 20-26, 28-36, and 41-43 are pending in this application. Applicants appreciate the courtesies extended by Examiner Nguyen during a personal interview on October 15, 2002 with Applicants' representatives. Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating in the interview summary that the proposed claims directed toward inspecting printed indicia, a logo, and a printed image would overcome the rejections based on Kumagai 6,031,933 and Tao 6,271,520.

In response, Applicants have amended the claims in the manner discussed during the interview in order to obtain early allowance of the subject matter presently claimed. The three pending independent claims are similar in structure except for the use of the different terms "printed indicia" (claim 14), "logo" (claim 24), and "printed image" (claim 31). The dependent claims have been amended to conform to this terminology.

As discussed in the Interview, Applicants will pursue additional subject matter in a continuing application. No new matter has been introduced by the amendments herein. Applicants therefore request entry of them at this time.

THE REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected claims 14-16, 18-20, 23-25, 27-28, 30-34, 36-39, and 43-44 under 35 USC § 103(a) based on the combination of Kumagai '933 with Yoshikawa '532. The Examiner additionally rejected claims 17, 26, 35, and 40-41 based on the same two references when further combined with Tao '147. The Examiner also rejected claims 21-22 and 29 based on the same two references when also combined with Yamada '262.

In view of the discussion during the interview regarding at least the primary reference, Kumagai '933, Applicants submit that the § 103 rejections are now moot. The Examiner indicated in the interview summary that the proposed amendment to use the terms "printed indicia", "logo", and "printed image" would overcome the cited references. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections are now moot and should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

All claims are believed to be in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that the present amendments still do not resolve all of the issues regarding patentability of the pending claims, Applicants invite the Examiner to contact the undersigned attorneys to discuss any remaining issues.

No other fees are believed to be due at this time. Should any fee be required, however, please charge such fee to Swidler Berlin Shereff Friedman, LLP Deposit Account No. 195127, Order No. 20002.0093.

Respectfully submitted,
SWIDLER BERLIN SHEREFF FRIEDMAN, LLP

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By: 

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APPENDIX A
MARKED UP VERSION OF THE AMENDED CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 19, 27, 37-39, 40, and 44. In addition, please amend the claims as follows:

14. (Amended) A method of automatically inspecting a [surface treatment] printed indicia on a game ball, which comprises the steps of:
- applying the [surface treatment] printed indicia to the game ball;
 - passing the game ball through an automated inspection system; and
 - determining conformance of the [surface treatment] printed indicia to a predetermined standard.
15. (Amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the step of determining conformance further comprises the step of:
- generating an analysis signal indicative of whether the [surface treatment] printed indicia conforms to the predetermined standard.
20. (Amended) The method of claim [19] 14, wherein the step of passing the game ball through an automated inspection system further comprises the steps of:
- illuminating the game ball; and
 - [detecting the illuminated agent with a machine vision system; and]
 - comparing the illuminated agent to the predetermined standard with a machine vision engine.
22. (Amended) The method of claim [21] 20, wherein the step of [providing a light source] illuminating the game ball further comprises:
- providing an environmental modification device to eliminate dimple effects, wherein the dimple effects comprise glare, shading, or image distortion.
23. (Amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the predetermined standard comprises a reference image of an acceptable [surface treatment] printed indicia.

24. (Amended) A method of automatically inspecting a [coating] logo on a game ball, which comprises the steps of:
- applying the [coating] logo to the game ball;
 - passing the game ball through an automated inspection system; and
 - determining conformance of the [coating] logo to a predetermined standard.
25. (Amended) The method of claim 24, wherein the step of determining conformance further comprises the step of:
- generating an analysis signal indicative of whether the [coating] logo conforms to predetermined standards.
28. (Amended) The method of claim 24, wherein the step of passing the game ball through an automated inspection system further comprises the steps of:
- illuminating the game ball; and
 - [detecting the illuminated agent with a machine vision system; and]
 - comparing the illuminated [agent] logo to a predetermined standard with a machine vision engine.
30. (Amended) The method of claim 24, wherein the predetermined standard comprises a reference image of an acceptable [coating] logo.
31. (Amended) A method of automatically inspecting [an indicia] a printed image on a game ball, which comprises the steps of:
- applying the [indicia] printed image to the game ball;
 - passing the game ball through an automated inspection system; and
 - determining conformance of the [indicia] printed image to a predetermined standard.
32. (Amended) The method of claim 31, wherein the step of applying the [indicia] printed image to the game ball comprises the steps of:
- combining at least one ink with at least one agent to obtain a mixture, wherein the agent is able to be illuminated under non-ambient lighting conditions;
 - and
 - applying the mixture to the game ball.

33. (Amended) The method of claim 31, wherein the step of passing the golf ball through an automated inspection system further comprises the steps of:
- illuminating the game ball; and
 - [detecting the illuminated agent with a machine vision system; and]
 - comparing the illuminated [agent] printed image to the predetermined standard with a machine vision engine.
34. (Amended) The method of claim 31, wherein the step of determining conformance further comprises the steps of:
- generating an analysis signal indicative of whether the [indicia] printed image conforms to the predetermined standard; and
 - using the analysis signal to transfer the game ball for further processing or reject the game ball depending on the analysis signal generated.
36. (Amended) The method of claim 31, wherein the predetermined standard comprises a reference image of an acceptable [indicia] printed image.
41. (Amended) The method of claim [40] 28, wherein the step of [providing a light source further] illuminating the game ball comprises:
- providing an environmental modification device to eliminate dimple effects, wherein the dimple effects comprise glare, shading, or image distortion.
42. (Amended) The method of claim [37] 24, wherein the step of determining conformance further comprises the steps of:
- generating an analysis signal indicative of whether the logo print conforms to the predetermined standard; and
 - using the analysis signal to transfer the game ball for further processing or reject the game ball depending on the analysis signal generated.
43. (Amended) The method of claim [37] 24, wherein the step of determining conformance further comprises the step of:
- using at least one analysis algorithm to determine whether extraneous marks are present on the game ball, wherein the extraneous marks comprise missing characters, ink smudges, ink smears, shadowing, missing sections

of print, partial character thickness deviation, complete character thickness deviation, or misaligned characters; and
using the analysis algorithm to transfer the game ball for further processing or reject the game ball depending on the analysis signal generated.

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